

Message Text

SECRET

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62

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R 311600Z MAR 74
FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1001
INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
USINT DAMASCUS
USMISSION GENEVA
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA

S E C R E T AMMAN 1671

EXDIS

GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR JO XF

SUBJ: JORDANIAN ACCOUNT OF TUNIS ARAB FONMIN CONFERENCE AND
CURRENT MIDEAST NEGOTIATIONS

1. DISCUSSED CURRENT STATE OF ARAB CONSULTATIONS ON MIDEAST
NEGOTIATIONS WITH JORDANIAN ROYAL INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS ADVISOR
ABDUL MUN'EM RIFAI WHO HAS JUST RETURNED FROM ARAB FONMIN MEETING
IN TUNIS.

2. RIFAI DESCRIBED SYRIAN-EGYPTIAN DISAGREEMENT AT TUNIS MEETING
REGARDING DATE OF NEXT ARAB SUMMIT. IN PRIVATE MEETING HELD
BETWEEN SYRIAN FONMIN KHADDAM, EGYPTIAN FONMIN FAHMY AND RIFAI,
SYRIAN FONMIN KHADDAM INSISTED ON APRIL SUMMIT BUT FINALLY
RELUCTANTLY AGREED AT EGYPTIAN FONMIN FAHMY'S URGING TO HOLD
SUMMIT AT A LATER DATE. RIFAI SAID FAHMY TOLD KHADDAM THAT
SYRIA SHOULD AGREE TO POSTPONE SUMMIT ON THE BASIS OF ASSURAN-
CES THAT ISRAEL WOULD AGREE IN APRIL TO A DISENGAGEMENT OF
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FORCES, WITH ISRAEL WITHDRAWING "BEYOND KUNEITRA". KHADDAM

REPLIED THAT SYRIA COULD NOT ACCEPT THAT ASSURANCE AND A LONG DEBATE ENSUED BEFORE SYRIA AGREED RELUCTANTLY TO POSTPONEMENT. RIFAI SAID IT WAS ENCOURAGING SIGN WITH REGARD TO SYRIAN INTENTIONS THAT ONE OF MOST TELLING ARGUMENTS (MADE BY RIFAI HIMSELF) IN INFLUENCING KHADDAAM TO AGREE TO POSTPONEMENT OF SUMMIT WAS THAT HOLDING ARAB SUMMIT IN APRIL WOULD RUN RISK OF ADVERSELY AFFECTING PROGRESS ON CURRENT SYRIAN-ISRAELI DISENGAGEMENT NEGOTIATIONS. RIFAI SAID HE WAS BOXED IN BY PLEAS FROM BOTH FAHMY AND KHADDAAM FOR SUPPORT, TOOK HIS USUAL SLIGHTLY PRO-EGYPTIAN POSITION AND ENDED BY EXPRESSING SATISFACTION IN JORDAN THAT SUMMIT IS BEING PUT OFF.

3. RIFAI SAID SSUMPTION INCORRECT THAT ARAB SUMMIT POSTPONED UNTIL SEPTEMBER. ACTUALLY, FONMINS AGREED TO POSTPONE APRIL SUMMIT AND TO LEAVE IT TO SYRIA ITSELF TO DECIDE DATE FOR SUMMIT MEETING, WITH IMPLICATION THAT SYRIA WOULD CHOOSE DATE IN LIGHT OF DEVELOPMENTS IN SYRIAN-ISRAELI DISENGAGEMENT NEGOTIATIONS. HE SEES SERIOUS POSSIBILITY SYRIA MIGHT CALL FOR SUMMIT ONLY IF APRIL SYRIAN-ISRAELI DISENGAGEMENT TIMETABLE SET BY FAHMY FAILS TO MATERIALIZE.

4. RIFAI SAID HE HAS BEEN ATTEMPTING TO PROMOTE A MORE ACTIVE ROLE FOR JORDAN IN MIDEAST NEGOTIATIONS. IN DISCUSSIONS WITH BOTH JORDANIANS AND OTHER ARABS. RIFAI SAID HE ATTEMPTED (IN MEETING IN ALEXANDRIA PRIOR TO TUNIS CONFERENCE) PERSUADE EGYPTIAN PRES. SADAT TO PRESS FOR AN EARLY RESUMPTION OF GENEVA CONFERENCE. HOWEVER SADAT FIRMLY REFUSED TO GO TO GENEVA UNTIL AFTER DISENGAGEMENT ON SYRIAN FRONT.

5. RIFAI SAID THAT SOME IN JORDAN HAD BEEN PROMOTING IDEA THAT JORDAN SHOULD RELINQUISH AN ACTIVE ROLE IN MIDEAST NEGOTIATIONS. RIFAI FELT THEIR POSITION WAS ILL ADVISED. HOWEVER ENTHUSIASM FOR THIS POSITION APPEARS TO HAVE DECREASED SINCE SECRETARYS VISIT TO JORDAN MARCH 2 AND KING HUSSEIN'S TRIP TO THE U.S. RIFAI SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED THAT CROWN PRINCE HASSAN APPEARS NOW TO ACQUIESCE IN MORE ACTIVE JORDANIAN ROLE.

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6. REGARDING KING HUSSEIN'S FORTHCOMING VISITS, RIFAI SAID KING SCHEDULED VISIT CAIRO ON OR BEFORE APRIL 4, PROBABLY FOR THREE DAYS. HE WILL THEN PROBABLY GO DIRECTLY FROM CAIRO TO DAMASCUS (ALTHOUGH SYRIAN SCHEDULE NOT FIRM) AND FINALLY TO SAUDI ARABIA. PICKERING

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